

STORAGE NAME: h0613.ei

DATE: April 5, 2000

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION INNOVATION
ANALYSIS**

BILL #: HB 613

RELATING TO: Prekindergarten Early Intervention Programs

SPONSOR(S): Representative Barreiro

TIED BILL(S): none

ORIGINATING COMMITTEE(S)/COMMITTEE(S) OF REFERENCE:

- (1) EDUCATION INNOVATION
 - (2) EDUCATION APPROPRIATION
 - (3)
 - (4)
 - (5)
-

I. SUMMARY:

HB 613 requires the Florida Partnership for School Readiness (Partnership), in consultation with the Legislature, to develop legislation to expand the prekindergarten early intervention program to provide access for *all* 4-year old children. The *School Readiness Act*, passed by the 1999 Legislature, consists of an integrated seamless service delivery system for all publicly funded early education and child care programs including the prekindergarten early intervention program. The expansion of the prekindergarten early intervention program to provide access for all 4-year old children conflicts with the *School Readiness Act* in the following ways:

Violates local control -- Under the *School Readiness Act*, the prekindergarten early intervention program is a component of the local school readiness coalition's integrated school readiness program. The coalition replaces the district interagency coordinating council, which, before the coalition, had the responsibility along with the district school board for developing the district's prekindergarten plan. Each local coalition *must* develop an implementation plan, which must include a written description of the involvement of the prekindergarten early intervention program. Presently, there are 57 coalitions, 10 of which are multi-county, representing all 67 counties.

Supersedes the sliding fee scale -- The legislative intent for the *School Readiness Act* was to operate in conjunction with but not as part of the public school system -- a separate program, separately funded, using a mandatory sliding fee scale. Each coalition implementation plan must include a parental co-payment through a sliding fee scale.

Opens program to all 4 year olds rather than giving priority to children who meet certain criteria -- The school readiness program is for children from birth to 5 or until the child enters kindergarten. Priority must be given to children who are at risk, have disabilities, are economically disadvantaged, or are eligible for the migrant preschool program.

Revises the priorities and aggressive timelines of the Partnership -- The Partnership has the responsibility for coordinating *all* school readiness programs. The Partnership met for the first time in June, 1999, and has maintained an aggressive schedule since; they have June, July, and December deadlines for adopting performance standards, a system for measuring school readiness, and a system for evaluating the performance of students through the third grade to compare the performance of those who participated in school readiness programs and those who did not.

The fiscal impact of implementing a prekindergarten early intervention program to provide access for all 4-year old children is approximately \$2,385,775,602.

II. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS:

A. DOES THE BILL SUPPORT THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES:

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|-----------------------------------|---|--|---|
| 1. <u>Less Government</u> | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. <u>Lower Taxes</u> | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. <u>Individual Freedom</u> | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. <u>Personal Responsibility</u> | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. <u>Family Empowerment</u> | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> | N/A <input type="checkbox"/> |

The expansion of the prekindergarten early intervention program to service all 4 year olds is more, not less, government.

B. PRESENT SITUATION:

The *School Readiness Act*, s. 411.01, F.S., was passed by the Legislature in 1999. It established a statewide school readiness program for the state's at-risk birth-to-kindergarten population. The program consists of an integrated seamless service delivery system for all publicly funded early education and child care programs including: First Start, Even Start, prekindergarten early intervention program, Head Start, migrant pre-k, Title I, subsidized child care, and teen parent. The legislative intent was to operate in conjunction with but not as part of the public school system -- a separate program, separately funded, using a mandatory sliding fee scale.

The Florida Partnership for School Readiness (16 members: 6 named, 10 appointed from the private sector) was created as the state-level governing board with responsibility for adopting and maintaining coordinated programmatic, administrative, and fiscal policies and standards for all school readiness programs.

As the principal organization responsible for enhancement of school readiness, the partnership has the following duties:

- Be responsible for the prudent use of all public and private funds in accordance with all legal and contractual requirements.
- Provide final approval and periodic review of coalitions and plans.
- Provide leadership for enhancement of school readiness by aggressively establishing a unified approach to the state's efforts toward enhancement of school readiness. In support of this effort, the partnership may develop and implement specific strategies that address the state's school readiness programs.
- Safeguard the effective use of federal, state, local, and private resources to achieve the highest possible level of school readiness for the state's children.
- Provide technical assistance to coalitions.
- Assess gaps in service.

- Provide technical assistance to counties that form a multi county coalition.
- Adopt a system, by July 1, 2000, for measuring school readiness that provides objective data regarding the expectations for school readiness, and establish a method for collecting the data and guidelines for using the data. The measurement, the data collection, and the use of the data must serve the statewide school readiness goal. The criteria for determining which data to collect should be the usefulness of the data to state policy makers and local program administrators in administering programs and allocating state funds, and must include the tracking of school readiness system information back to individual school readiness programs to assist in determining program effectiveness.
- Adopt a system, by December 31, 2000, for evaluating the performance of students through the third grade to compare the performance of those who participated in school readiness programs with the performance of students who did not participate in school readiness programs in order to identify strategies for continued successful student performance.
- Develop and adopt performance standards and outcome measures by June 1, 2000.
- Assess the expertise of public and private Florida postsecondary institutions in the areas of infant and toddler developmental research; the related curriculum of training, career, and academic programs; and the status of articulation among those programs. Based on this assessment, which will be done in consultation with the Postsecondary Education Planning Commission and the Education Standards Commission, the partnership must provide recommendations to the Governor and Legislature for postsecondary program improvements to enhance school readiness initiatives.
- Coordinate the efforts toward school readiness and provide independent policy analyses and recommendations to the Governor, the State Board of Education, and the Legislature.
- Prepare and submit to the State Board of Education a system for measuring school readiness by July 1, 2000, which includes a uniform screening, that will provide objective data regarding expectations for school readiness.
- Prepare a plan for implementing the system for measuring school readiness so all children will undergo the uniform screening established by the partnership when they enter kindergarten. Children who enter public school for the first time in first grade must undergo a uniform screening approved by the partnership for use in first grade. Because children with disabilities may not be able to meet all of the identified expectations for school readiness, the plan must incorporate mechanisms for recognizing the potential variations in expectations for school readiness when serving children with disabilities and must provide for communities to serve children with disabilities.
- Recommend to the Governor, the Commissioner of Education, and the State Board of Education rules, and revisions or repeal of rules, which would increase the effectiveness of programs that prepare children for school.

- Conduct studies and planning activities related to the overall improvement and effectiveness of school-readiness measures.
- Work with the Office of the Comptroller for electronic funds transfer by February 1, 2000.
- Present a plan for combining funding streams into a School Readiness Trust Fund by February 1, 2000.
- Establish procedures for performance-based budgeting in school readiness programs.
- Submit an annual report of activities to the Governor, the executive director of the Florida Healthy Kids Corporation, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the minority leaders of both houses of the Legislature. In addition, the partnership's reports and recommendations must be made available to the State Board of Education, other appropriate state agencies and entities, district school boards, central agencies for child care, and county health departments. The annual report must provide an analysis of the coalition annual reports including school readiness activities across the state, the number of children who were served in the programs, and the number of children who were ready for school.
- Work with school readiness coalitions to increase parents' training for and involvement in their children's preschool education and to provide family literacy activities and programs. To ensure that the system for measuring school readiness is comprehensive and appropriate statewide, as the system is developed and implemented, the partnership must consult with representatives of district school systems, providers of public and private child care, health care providers, large and small employers, experts in education for children with disabilities, and experts in child development.

Additionally, the partnership may adopt rules necessary to prepare and implement the school readiness system, including those pertaining to collecting data, approving local readiness coalitions and plans, providing for coalitions to serve two or more counties, awarding incentives to coalitions and issuing waivers. The partnership is given all power necessary to carry out the purposes of the school readiness program, including receiving and accepting grants, loans or funding advances from public or private agencies and any source contributions of money, property, labor, or any other thing of value, to be held, used, and applied.

The partnership is an independent, nonpartisan body and may not be identified or affiliated with any one agency, program, or group. Its budget is funded annually through the GAA and is subject to compliance audits and annual financial audits by the Auditor General.

They met for the first time in June, 1999, and they have maintained an aggressive schedule since.

School Readiness Coalitions

School readiness coalitions (18 to 25 members, more than 1/3 from the private sector) and implementation plans are phased in and are subject to the partnership's approval. Counties serving less than 400 children must join in a coalition with another county, share a

fiscal agent, or demonstrate efficiency and effective plan implementation. Each coalition must implement a plan that includes a comprehensive program of school readiness services that enhance the cognitive, social, and physical development of children to achieve the performance standards and outcome measures specified by the partnership. Each local coalition must develop an implementation plan, which must include a written description of the involvement of the prekindergarten early intervention program and a sliding fee scale.

The program must include: developmentally appropriate curriculum, character development, age-appropriate assessment of each child's development, pretest upon entering and posttest upon leaving each program, appropriate staff-to-child ratio, healthful and safe environment, and a resource and referral network to assist informed parental choice. Additionally, each plan must provide: parental co-payment through a sliding fee scale, parental choice of settings and locations, trained instructional staff, eligibility priority for at-risk and economically disadvantaged children (*once in the program, the child may remain until kindergarten*), reimbursement rates developed by the coalition, systems support and direct enhancement services, a business plan, strategies to meet the needs of unique populations, and a fiscal agent who acts on policy direction from the coalition. The local school readiness coalitions and implementation plans are phased in.

Presently, there are 57 coalitions, 10 of which are multi-county. All 67 counties are represented by a coalition.

Program Eligibility

The school readiness program is established for children under the age of kindergarten eligibility. Priority for participation in the school readiness program must be given to children who meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Children under the age of kindergarten eligibility who are:
 - children determined to be at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation and who are currently clients of the Children and Family Services Program Office of the Department of Children and Family Services;
 - children at risk of welfare dependency, including economically disadvantaged children, children of participants in the WAGES program, children of migrant farm workers, and children of teen parents; and
 - children of working families whose family income does not exceed 150 percent of the federal poverty level.
- Three-year-old children and 4-year-old children who may not be economically disadvantaged but who have disabilities, have been served in a specific part-time or combination of part-time exceptional education programs with required special services, aids, or equipment, and were previously reported for funding part time with the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) as exceptional students.
- Economically disadvantaged children, children with disabilities, and children at risk of future school failure, from birth to four years of age, who are served at home through home visitor programs and intensive parent education programs such as the Florida First Start Program.
- Children who meet federal and state requirements for eligibility for the migrant preschool program but who do not meet the criteria of economically disadvantaged.

An "economically disadvantaged" child means a child whose family income is below 150 percent of the federal poverty level. Notwithstanding any change in a family's economic status, but subject to additional family contributions in accordance with the sliding fee scale, a child who meets the eligibility requirements upon initial registration for the program must be considered eligible until the child reaches kindergarten age.

Prekindergarten Early Intervention Program

The prekindergarten early intervention program and its funding stream are components of the coalition's integrated school readiness program. The prekindergarten early intervention program, pursuant to s. 230.2305, F.S., was originally designed to serve *economically disadvantaged 3 and 4* year olds in educational programs administered by Florida's school districts and funded with lottery dollars. The majority of the children were to be 4 years old. The district interagency coordinating council and the local school board had the responsibility for developing the district's prekindergarten plan. The district interagency coordinating council was replaced in the School Readiness Act by the local school readiness coalition.

Funding

A coalition's school readiness program will have available to it funding from all the coalition's early education and child care programs that are funded with state, federal, lottery or local funds, including Florida First Start programs, Even-Start literacy programs, prekindergarten early intervention programs, Head Start Programs, programs offered by public and private providers of child care, migrant prekindergarten programs, Title I programs, subsidized child care programs and teen parent programs, together with any additional funds appropriated or obtained for the coalition's program. These funds must be transferred for the benefit of the coalition for implementation of its plan, including the hiring of staff to effectively operate the coalition's school readiness program.

Administrative costs must be kept to the minimum necessary for efficient and effective administration of the plan, but total administrative expenditures must not exceed 5 percent unless specifically waived by the partnership. The partnership must annually report to the Legislature any problems relating to administrative costs.

Funding will be distributed as block grants to assist coalitions in integrating services and funding to develop a quality service delivery system. Subject to an appropriation, the partnership may also provide financial awards to coalitions demonstrating success in merging and integrating funding streams to serve children and school readiness programs.

All cost savings and all revenues received through a mandatory sliding fee scale must be used to help fund the local school readiness program.

C. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

This bill requires the Florida Partnership for Schools Readiness, in consultation with the Legislature, to develop legislation to expand the prekindergarten early intervention program to provide access for all 4-year old children, at no cost to the children's parents. The bill requires the Florida Partnership for School Readiness to report its recommendations to the Legislature, in the form of legislation, no later than November 1, 2000.

The bill states that: "There is hereby appropriated an amount sufficient to carry out the provisions of this act."

The intent of HB 613 for the development of the prekindergarten early intervention program to provide access for all 4-year old children conflicts with the *School Readiness Act* in the following ways:

- Violates local control
- Supersedes the sliding fee scale
- Opens program to *all* 4 year olds rather than giving priority to children who meet certain criteria
- Revises the priorities and aggressive timelines of the Partnership

D. SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS:

This section need be completed only in the discretion of the Committee.

III. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT:

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

N/A

2. Expenditures:

200,000	Total population of 4 years olds in Florida
- 46,889	Four years olds served in the state subsidized programs (except for Head Start programs not administered by school districts)

153,111	Four year olds to be served
X \$ 3,200	Current amount the state pays per FTE for Prekindergarten Early Intervention program

\$489,955,200	Cost to serve all 4 year olds not currently in state subsidized program

If a prekindergarten early intervention program for all 4 year olds is implemented at no cost to the parents, the sliding fee scale would not apply to that program. Consequently, the 46,899 children currently being served in other programs could move to the prekindergarten early intervention program because there would be no cost to the parents. This would increase the cost by approximately *an additional* \$150,076,800, bringing the total cost for all 200,000 four year olds in the state to \$640,032,000.

If the program for all 4 year olds was implemented, additional classrooms would be needed. The 1997 cost per student station as prescribed by s. 235.216, F.S., is \$11,600. The statute provides that this amount be adjusted annually by the Consumer Price Index. The 2000-2001 adjusted cost is \$12,382.

153,111 X\$ 12,382 <hr style="border-top: 1px dashed black;"/> \$1,895,820,402	Four year olds to be served 2000-2001 cost per student station Cost to provide student stations for all 4 year olds not currently in state subsidized program
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All population numbers and the inflationary adjustment for the cost-per-student-station are from the Office of Economic and Demographic Research.

\$489,955,200 + \$1,895,820,402 <hr style="border-top: 1px dashed black;"/> \$2,385,775,602	Cost to serve all 4 year olds not currently in state subsidized program Cost to provide student stations for all 4 year olds not currently in state subsidized program TOTAL COST
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B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

N/A

2. Expenditures:

N/A

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

N/A

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

IV. CONSEQUENCES OF ARTICLE VII, SECTION 18 OF THE FLORIDA CONSTITUTION:

A. APPLICABILITY OF THE MANDATES PROVISION:

This bill does not require counties or municipalities to expend funds.

B. REDUCTION OF REVENUE RAISING AUTHORITY:

This bill does not reduce the authority of counties or municipalities to raise revenue.

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C. REDUCTION OF STATE TAX SHARED WITH COUNTIES AND MUNICIPALITIES:

This bill does not reduce the percentage of state tax shared with counties and municipalities.

V. COMMENTS:

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

N/A

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

N/A

C. OTHER COMMENTS:

N/A

VI. AMENDMENTS OR COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES:

N/A

VII. SIGNATURES:

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION INNOVATION:

Prepared by:

Staff Director:

Alex Amengual

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